DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 409 HE 021 275

AUTHOR Kuh, George D.
TITLE A Brief for Incorporating Organizational Theory in Student Affairs Preparation and Research. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.
PUB DATE Nov 87
NOTE 38p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (Baltimore, MD, November 21-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Research; Education Majors; Graduate Study; Higher Education; Institutional Research; *Leadership Responsibility; *Organizational Theories; Postsecondary Education as a Field of Study; *Professional Education; *Student Personnel Workers
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

The view that organizational theory should be a required component of graduate preparation in student affairs is addressed. After defining organizational behavior, conventional models and nonorthodox perspectives on organizing are contrasted. Implications of nonorthodox perspectives for leadership are also considered. Suggestions are offered of how organizational theory can be incorporated into student affairs preparation and research. Organizational theory is an eclectic discipline and incorporates concepts from sociology, social psychology, anthropology, and philosophy. Organizational behavior is used to refer to relationships among actors, actors' attitudes and behaviors, and events in the college. Identifying the actors and their roles is difficult since colleges are increasingly influenced by external agencies and constituent groups. Conventional models consider organizational behavior to be goal-directed and generally portray the institution of a "closed" system. Emergent organizational perspectives, on the other hand, share the following qualities: (1) each institutional context is believed to be unique; (2) there is a recognition that people construct reality for themselves; and it is assumed that all members of an organization have expertise, power, and respponsibility. Included are 58 references. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED292409

VI A

A Brief For Incorporating Organizational Theory in Student Affairs Preparation and Research

George D. Kuh
Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
School of Education
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

George D. Kuh

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Presented at the meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Baltimore, November 1987

HE 021 275

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ASHE

ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
STUDY OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Texas A&M University
Department of Educational
Administration
College Station, TX 77843
(409) 845-0393

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, November 21-24, 1987. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

A Brief for Incorporating Organizational Theory in Student Affairs Preparation and Research

Institutions of higher education have become increasingly complex.

> Once perceived as isolated "ivory towers," the higher education community is subject to more scrutiny and control by federal and state agencies, accrediting bodies, and other professional associations. Alumni, collective bargaining units, and other special interest groups compete for the attention of faculty and administrators. Legislators, corporate and philanthropic sponsors, and others attempt to influence policy decisions, curriculum, and institutional governance. The offices and structures created to respond to these outside pressures have resulted in increased organizational complexity (Albright, Barr, Golseth, Kuh, Lyons, Rhatigan & Sandeen, in press).

Students have changed also. For example, less than half are traditional age (18-22) undergraduates, or enrolled for full-time study. More commute to school and attend part-time, most take more than four years to complete a baccalaureate degree. Students come from all socioeconmic backgrounds; many campuses reflect the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of the United States. Substantial numbers experience language barriers to learning or must cope with physical or other disabilities.

In most institutions of higher education, student affairs is expected to provide services consistent with students' needs and

the institutional context (Albright et al., in press). Is the preparation student affairs professionals receive adequate for coping with students with diverse characteristics and needs in the context of a complex organization?

Counseling has been the curricular home for the majority of student affairs preparation programs (Rodgers, 1977). Thus, many student affairs staff have studied theories about personal adjustment, personality functioning, individual motives and aspirations, and small group behavior. Student development theory, the theoretical cornerstone of student affairs work since the mid 1970s, is focused on individual development. Counseling and student development theories have raised the quality of professional preparation in student affairs but these theories are based on models of individual psychology which do not explicitly examine the relationship between individuals and organizational structures and goverance processes.

The argument advanced in this paper is that organizational theory should be a required component of graduate preparation in student affairs. After defining organizational behavior, conventional models and nonorthodox perspectives on organizing are contrasted. Some comments about the implications of nonorthodox perspectives for leadership are offered. The paper concludes with illustrations of how organizational theory can be incorporated into student affairs preparation and research.

Definitions

Organizational theory offers a frame of reference within which to interpret the behavior of individuals (students, faculty

members, student affairs professionals) and groups in relation to the college as a complex organization. More specifically, organizational theory guides efforts to interpret and analyze individual and group behavior and processes such as resource allocation, policy making, personnel management, leadership, institutional renewal, reorganization of administrative units, and termination of programs.

Organizational theory is an eclectic discipline and incorporates concepts from sociology, social psychology, anthropology, and philosophy (Morgan, 1986; Peterson, Cameron, Mets, Jones & Ettington, 1986; Pfeffer, 1982). In recent years, derivative models from business and education have been developed to extend theories about organizational behavior to different organizational settings.

The term "organizational behavior" is a personification, an attempt to give human characteristics to inanimate elements of colleges and universities (Weick, 1979). A student affairs office does not perform, however. Rather, the people in the office are responsible for what is accomplished. In this paper, organizational behavior refers to the relationships among actors, the actors' attitudes and beliefs, actions, and events in a college or university. Identifying the actors, the actors' roles, and the relationships between actors and actions is difficult as institutions of higher education are increasingly influenced by external agencies and constituent groups such as those identified in the opening paragraph. Multiple constituencies add to the complexity of an environment characterized by competing values and preferences of faculty,

professional staff, administrators, and students (Cohen & March, 1974; Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker & Riley, 1977). Some organizational theories (e.g., political model) explicitly acknowledge the relationships among external groups and behavior in institutions of higher education; thus, organizational theory can offer insights about the context in which student development and student affairs work takes place.

Organizational theories are abstract representations of experience. No single perspective or view of organizational behavior can account for or explain everything that takes place in a student affairs division. Just as student development theories (psychosocial, cognitive-intellectual, moral-ethical) illuminate certain aspects of students' growth and behavior but do not explain other aspects, so it is with organizational theories. Therefore, using multiple interpretations to analyze organizations and individual behavior increases the number of meaningful insights into student affairs work that can be generated.

In practice, theoretical concepts from various models and perspectives are mixed with experience in a practitioner's mind and become theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1978), highly personalized and unique patterns of understanding. Familiarity with varied interpretations of organizational behavior increases the possibility that an individual's theories-in-use will enable her or him to generate more accurate interpretations of events and actions than are possible with any one organizational perspective or any one theory based on the psychology of the

individual (Kuh, 1984a).

A Synopsis of Conventional Organizational Models

To varying degrees, conventional models of organizing, such as rational (Chaffee, 1983), academic bureaucracy (Baldridge et al., 1977; Strange, 1983), collegial (Baldridge et al., 1977), and political (Baldridge, 1971), emphasize four properties: (a) hierarchical structures, (b) clear communication channels, (c) top-down expertise, control, and authority, and (d) reliability and predictability (Clark, 1985; Kuh, Whitt & Shedd, 1987--Table 1).

Hierarchical structures are common to most colleges and universities. Title and position of institutional agents determine and describe responsibilities and authority. A chain of command is implied; those near the top of the hierarchy (e.g., a chief student affairs officer) are expected to be more knowledgeable and to have greater expertise in most matters than those who are lower in the organizational hierarchy (e.g., an assistant dean, resident assistants). Staff believe that the organizational structure also dictates who is responsible for sharing what kind of information with whom. For example, resident assistants convey information about residence hall policies and practices to students and report problems to supervisors. The director of residence life reports information from RAs to the chief student affairs officer (CSAO). In turn, the CSAO informs the campus chief executive officer (CEO) about unusual events in the residence halls and usually speaks for student life when communication is required with external

audiences (e.g., parents, community leaders). Through centralization and coordination, information can be monitored for accuracy and disseminated to the appropriate audiences.

Conventional organizational models assert that the quality of decision making and policy formulation is a function of accurate information and appropriate technology (i.e., the means by which the organization gets work accomplished). Ineffective or inefficient management is attributed to inadequate information or flawed technology. For example, tardy financial aid awards may be explained by obsolete or poorly conceived computer software which does not accommodate recent changes in federal aid programs. Flawed technology could also include outdated communication networks or human errors such as decision-making processes that exclude legitimate stakeholders (e.g., failure to obtain input from parents in changing residence hall visitation policies).

Despite the increasing influence of external forces, conventional organizational models (with the exception of the political model) generally portray the institution as a "closed" system. That is, all the most important variables (including people) and conditions are considered open to purposeful manipulation and control by institutional agents (Katz & Rosenwicz, 1974). For example, a closed systems approach to address alcohol abuse in residence halls might focus on students' behavior in the hall environment and not take into account societal norms, drinking patterns common to ethnic groups, family history of alcohol use, and so on.

Much of the student affairs literature is based on

assumptions of control, predictability, and hierarchical authority compatible with the closed system orientation of conventional organizational models. For example, Borland (1983) asserted that rational models and practices are integral to effective student affairs organizations. Foxley (1980) argued for the use of management by objectives (MBO) and planning and programming and budgeting systems (PPBS) to increase accountability and maintain organizational health. Dutton and Rickard (1980) advocated that student affairs adopt a systems approach in which student services units are functionally interdependent with other institutional functions.

Space does not permit nor does the purpose of the symposium justify a discussion of the characteristics of each model. However, the advantages and disadvantages of conventional models are summarized in Table 2.

Implications of Conventional Models

Conventional models consider organizational behavior to be goal-directed. Either clear goals must be consensually validated and agreement must be reached on how to attain the goals, as in the rational, bureaucratic, and collegial models, or the preferences of one person or coalition supercede the goals of others as in the political model (Tables 1 and 2). Logic and reason are paramount in problem solving, planning, and policymaking, although power also influences the decisionmaking process. Persons with the most expertise (i.e., at the top of the hierarchy) are expected to measure, evaluate, and reward efficiency and effectiveness. Needs can be documented and

prioritized, priorities can be established through reasoned discussion and weighing of facts, and resources can be apportioned to priorities. The extent to which processes such as problem seeking, problem solving, and planning are reliable and predictable depends upon factors such as information and technology (Clark, 1985). The conventional models assume that more accurate and reliable information and technology lead to more efficient and effective organizations (Tables 1 and 2).

Student affairs managers who rely on conventional models of organizing believe they are responsible for articulating what must be done and when, how it must be done, and by whom. Leadership tasks and tactics are driven by assumed responsibility for control. Control is exercised from the top downward, a process which often erodes trust and motivation, and places persons lower in the hierarchy on the defensive (Morgan, 1986). CSAOs and department heads send directives through appropriate institutional channels (such as chains of command, collegial governance structures, institutional policy-making bodies). Staff at lower levels expect leaders to provide direction. Success is measured by the accuracy of predictions, comprehensiveness of plans, and the degree to which intended objectives are attained. To the extent that staff fulfill supervisors' expectations and the unit runs smoothly, student affairs is judged to be effective.

For more than 50 years, conventional models have dominated thinking about organizational behavior. When used in concert, conventional models, which are based on beliefs about how

institutions of higher education should work (Kuh, 1983a), account for many important aspects of college and university life. Although most student affairs staff have not studied formal theories of organizational behavior, they tend to hold beliefs about organizations consistent with conventional models (Kuh, 1983a). However, when people do not behave as they are supposed to, unexamined assumptions manifested as conventional expectations for organizational behavior may not be very helpful. In certain situations, such assumptions may become debilitating and paralytic.

A Synopsis of Emergent, Non-orthodox Perspectives on Organizing

Within the last two decades, different ways of thinking about organizational behavior have evolved which challenge many of the assumptions on which conventional models are based. Metaphors have been used to generate alternative interpretations of organizational behavior (e.g., flying seesaws--Hedberg, Nystrom & Starbuck, 1976, garbage cans--Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972, and rainforest tribes--Schroeder, Nicholls & Kuh, 1983). These interpretations seem to more accurately reflect everyday experience in institutions of higher education.

The enthusiasm for alternative organizational views and metaphors is buttressed by challenges to conventional models in other fields. In virtually every discipline (e.g., history, law, economics, psychology, physics), discoveries have been made which question the efficacy of conventional assumptions for giving meaning to experience and indicate a shift to qualitatively different perspectives (Capra, 1983; Ferguson, 1980; Howard,

1985; Kuhn, 1970; Lincoln, 1985; Schwartz & Ogilvy, 1979).

Conventional and emergent, non-orthodox assumptions related to goals, determinism, causality, and predictability are disjunct (Clark, 1985--see Tables 1 and 3). In the emergent perspective, information flows in many different directions and mutually shaping interactions between individuals within and across organizational units influence (but not in a causal manner) institutional processes such as policy making and program implementation. The three perspectives on organizing summarized in Table 4, organized anarchy (Cohen & March, 1974, Georgiou, 1971; Weick, 1979), culture (Dill, 1982; Masland, 1985; Morgan, 1986; Schein, 1985), and holographic image (Morgan, 1986; Schwartz & Ogilvy, 1979), are based on assumptions compatible with the emergent, non-orthodox view of organizations.

Implications of Emergent Organizational Perspectives

Emergent perspectives share several qualities. First, each institutional context is believed to be unique. Therefore, behavior which is effective in one setting may not be effective in another institution or at a later date in the same setting (Table 4).

Second, emergent perspectives recognize that people construct reality for themselves (Capra, 1983; Lincoln, 1985; Schwartz & Ogilvy, 1979; Weick, 1979). The emergent perspectives acknowledge subjective influences and multiple realities and eschew the illusion of a single objective reality which permeates conventional models of organizing. What people see is filtered through a lens colored by past experiences, current

circumstances, and personal agendas. Sensemaking is influenced not only by externally verified factors, but by shared beliefs and organizational values that shape activities and behaviors.

Student affairs staff interpret and give meaning to everything they encounter. Faculty, student affairs staff, students, and others are influenced through mutually shaping interactions; each individual interprets events differently but, like a hologram, each interpretation also reflects the whole of the institution but from a different perspective (Kuh et al., 1987). The "collective unconscious" or culture (Smircich, 1983), created over time through many interactions of organization members, is continually evolving and cannot be directly, purposefully controlled by any person or group.

Third, emergent perspectives suggest that all members of an organization have expertise, power, and responsibility. Contrary to conventional organizational models in which those higher in the hierarchy have more expertise, emergent perspectives suggest that persons closest to the effective point of action should be directly involved in the resolution of issues and development of policy (Kuh, 1985; Kuh et al., 1987). Thus, entry level student affairs staff are considered competent, perhaps uniquely qualified, to help students respond to problems and issues (e.g., RAs for residence hall floor concerns, Greek advisor for fraternity house problems, or financial aid director for students' financial problems).

Concepts associated with emergent, non-orthodox perspectives are compatible with an ecological view of colleges and universities (Banning, 1980). While the physical environment is

important, it is but one influence which shapes behavior and expectations. The campus is an interconnected web of physical structures and spaces, relationships, activities, and behaviors shaped by the interpretations that people give to places, events, actions, and processes. Human systems evolve over time through numerous interactions among different individuals and groups (i.e., mutual shaping) which are associated casually (not causally) with changes in organizational structures and processes. People, events, and actions influence one another and are related to outcomes; however, it is impossible to link specific causes with specific effects. Changes in form may be spontaneous or cumulative and incremental; unpredictable and unanticipated outcomes eventuate and new organizational structures evolve. For example:

> Career planning functions evolved out of placement or counseling functions. Some of the reasons for the evolution were common across institutions (e.g., to help students and alumni cope with a depressed economy and contracting job markets for college graduates in certain fields); other environmental factors were institution-specific (e.g., counseling center staff wished to spend time on therapy with individual clients rather than interpret vocational interest batteries with groups of students). (Kuh et al., 1987, p. 29)

The current forms and functions of career centers could not have been predicted in the 1960s or early 1970s.

Leadership. Emergent perspectives require new assumptions

about leader behavior. The capacity to think and act in paradoxical ways is important for leaders adapting emergent perspectives to student affairs (Huff, 1985). Students, staff, and faculty expect the CSAO to clarify ambiguity by reducing the complexity of the situation out of which ambiguity was born. At the same time, the CSAO (and other leaders in the student affairs division) must provide an historical context for current issues and demonstrate the connections between one situation and other events and activities (Neustadt & May, 1986). Through the contradictory processes of simplifying and complicating, ambiguity is reduced through explanation; the complexity of constitutuents' understanding of organizational issues is increased as well. The process of simplifying and complicating adds depth and perspective to an information-rich environment open to multiple interpretations. Thus, as participants learn more about the organization, understandings between members and knowledge about the organization as a whole are increased.

Gardner's (1986) definition of leadership is compatible with emergent perspectives: leadership "is the process of persuasion and example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to take action that is in accord with the leader's purposes or the shared purposes of all" (p. 6). A leader must be perceived by followers as competent, prepared, analytical, interpersonally mature, and supportive of others' visions and values. Technical competence remains important; leaders must have knowledge and skill in budgeting, conflict resolution, interpersonal communication, and legal principles (Sergiovanni,

1984).

Emergent perspectives underscore the principle that there is no substitute for human contact--face to face meetings in small groups, chance encounters, and MBWA (management by walking around). Frequent interactions between leaders and staff encourage behaviors and actions compatible with self-organizing (e.g., exchange of information, trust, risk taking--Morgan, 1986). The confidence staff have in their leaders is related to the amount of confidence they have in themselves (Gardner, 1986, p. 18). Greenleaf's (1977) conception of leader as servant is consistent with this view--others "freely respond only to [those] who are...proven and trusted servants" (p. 10). To be accepted by their followers, leaders must promote independent thinking, risk taking, and sharing intellectual and emotional responses (Gardner, 1986). Thus, flexibility, creativity, trust, and empowerment replace conventional leader functions of control, delegation of authority, and evaluation.

The preeminent challenge of emergent leadership is **transformation** (Gardner, 1986; Cameron & Ulrich, 1986). "**Transformation** implies a metamorphosis or a substitution of one state or system for another, so that a qualitatively different condition is present. **Transformation** implies a change of systems, not just a change in systems" (Cameron & Ulrich, 1986, p. 1). Transformations are much more likely today because of the pressures placed on college and universities by multiple constituencies and competition among public agencies for resources. But a paradox exists in this new environment. "On the one hand, leaders will require the ability to maintain

efficiency, stability, and smooth functioning. On the other hand, they will be required to be visionary, discordant, and innovative" (Cameron & Ulrich, 1986, p. 11).

The emergent perspectives suggest that leadership is more art than science (Pondy, 1978; Sergiovanni, 1984). Example (e.g., role modeling) is as important to effective leadership as exhortation and persuasion. Leaders use symbols and other cultural artifacts including rites, ceremonies, and ritualistic behavior to help others understand what is important to the institution (Kuh, 1985). In this sense, leadership is a "shaping" influence, and the leader serves as a symbolic guide (Meyer, 1984) in the transformation process (Cameron & Ulrich, 1986).

According to Burns (1978), "transforming leadership" ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus has a transforming effect on both" (p. 5). Transformative leadership is attractive because it implies "a somewhat romantic notion of the leader as one who will make all things right. We know now that the leader is one element in an organized system...and that the system is influenced by larger economic and social trends, and that all are moving in the stream of history" (Gardner, 1986, p. 23).

Transformative power differs from power in conventional orgainzational models in that influence is given away, not intentionally exercised or manipulated by the leader. A transformative environment encourages staff to dream, to

experiment without fear of failure and punishment, and to challenge institutional norms with impunity, a tactic consistent with action learning. To avoid organizational stagnation, leaders must be open to testing limits, taking risks, admitting failure, and embracing error (Michael, 1985), behaviors which are consistent with action learning principles and which reflect a healthy disdain for single loop learning.

Suggestions for Incorporating Organizational Theory in Student Affairs Preparation and Research

Everyday, student affairs staff use informal theories about organizations. These theories encompass concepts from a variety of disciplines and experiences in institutions of higher education and other organized settings (e.g., family, school, church). Conventional and emergent organizational concepts are important enough that they should be systematically examined, challenged, and applied in professional preparation programs, student affairs research, and staff development activities.

Preparation Programs and Staff Development

Three types of student affairs preparation programs have been approved by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) (1986): counseling, student development, and administration. The conceptual framework for these program tracks was based on the results of a study of preparation program curricula conducted in the mid-1970s (Rodgers, 1977). Many counseling-based student affairs preparation programs do not include formal study of organizational theories. Students who do not have work experience often perceive organizational theory as

irrelevant to their future role in student affairs. Most master's level students have an affinity for human development models that stimulate personal revelations and help the students, many of whom are just out of undergraduate school, to organize and understand what they experienced as undergraduates.

Human development courses are important. But master's level students must also be introduced to conventional models and emergent perspectives on organizational behavior to understand the context within which student development occurs. Without at least an introduction to organizational theory, student affairs professionals will be disadvantaged by an underdeveloped capacity to analyze the relationships between relevant factors in the external and internal environments. Doctoral level students who aspire to leadership positions should be expected to have at least one organizational theory course and one or more advanced seminars in education, business, or sociology which examine in greater depth one or more organizational theories.

Qualities compatible with emergent, non-orthodox organizational perspectives are not clearly reflected in the CAS standards. For example, although naturalistic research methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) are mentioned as an option in the organizational behavior and development component of the Student Development and Administration tracks, naturalistic inquiry is not specifically addressed in the research and evaluation component. While it could be argued that the description of research and evaluation (CAS, 1986, p. 105) is general enough to embrace any inquiry paradigm, it is not likely that naturalistic

inquiry will be emphasized given the disjunct between conventional, positivst assumptions and emergent paradigm assumptions.

A lot is expected of student affairs preparation programs. Students are expected to learn substantive content related to the practice of student affairs and acquire research and writing skills. Faculty are expected to produce useful knowledge about the field. Through mutually-shaping socialization experiences, students and faculty affirm the importance of student affairs work to IHEs. In the future, student affairs preparation programs must also introduce the emergent, non-orthodox perspectives on organizing to the field. While incorporating emergent perspectives in the curriculum won't be impossible, neither will it come easily. Many faculty and students have grown up with and are very comfortable with conventional knowledge production approaches and organizational expectations. Some faculty and more than a few students are likely to experience what might be described as an existential crisis when confronted with non-orthodox perspectives (Kuh et al., 1987).

To support experimentation with qualities associated with the emergent perspectives, the preparation program environment must provide ample psychological space and support. The experiences of those grappling to reconcile conventional and emergent ways of making meaning must be publicly confirmed so that all know that the struggle is one that is of importance to the entire community. Students must be challenged to identify their own assumptions and beliefs about what is personally meaningful or "true" in the organizational context. Only by

discovering what they believe, and testing their beliefs against the realities of others, can students appreciate what cannot be known for certain.

Both conventional models and emergent, non-orthodox perspectives on organizing can serve as useful frameworks for staff development activities. By contrasting the assumptions on which conventional and emergent perspectives are based, "the 'sacred totems' of the student affairs rainforest" (Schroeder, et al., 1983, p. 53), the assumptions which guide student affairs work, can be identified. Concepts such as loose coupling and fluid participation, when discussed openly, can increase tolerance for error and help staff appreciate the importance of interacting face-to-face with colleagues (Kuh, 1983b). The process of addressing these ideas is an opportunity to practice action learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978) and to test the concordance among assumptions about student affairs held by persons throughout the institution.

Knowledge Production

Much of what is reported in the student affairs literature does not stimulate the imagination of practitioners nor accurately describe what they experience in their work place (Kuh, Bean, Bradley & Coomes, 1986a). Empirical descriptions of student affairs organizations are grounded primarily in conventional assumptions about organizations and reinforce expectations for control, linear causality, and tight coupling which contradict the actual experiences of student affairs staff.

Blind allegiance to conventional models unduly delimit

examinations of the contributions of student affairs work to the goals of the academy. Student affairs workers are in the business of responding to students' needs and shaping the college environment in a manner compatible with an institution's mission. Short, simplistic questionnaire surveys or checklists designed to assess satisfaction with programs or with other aspects of the college experience sometimes generate useful data. But such data cannot capture and adequately describe the contributions made by a staff member who sits up all night with a depressed student or one who meets over the noon hour with a student government officer anxious about chairing his or her first meeting.

Studies about student affairs organizations grounded in assumptions congenial to emergent organizational perspectives will likely be of interest to practitioners as well as scholars (Kuh, Bean, Bradley & Coomes, 1986b). Such studies will require different methodological approaches (e.g., case studies using qualitative techniques--Miles & Huberman, 1984) than those typically found in student affairs journals (Kuh et al., 1986a). Thoughtful essays about leadership which are compatible with emergent perspectives would also be welcome. No comprehensive work exists on leadership in student affairs except for unpublished dissertations (e.g., Halstead, 1980).

Proponents of student development have long argued that human development theory should be used to guide the behavior of student affairs staff when working with students. But relatively little is known about what student development theory looks like when implemented in the organizational context of a college or

university. Questionnaire surveys might provide some information about **espoused** theory in use. Such methods, however, cannot capture the complexities of the work environment and the diversity of the students and faculty groups with which student affairs staff must contend. What if naturalistic inquiry methods, compatible with non-orthodox perspectives on organizing, were used to answer the question, "What does the concept of student development look like in student affairs practice?" The complexity and multiple challenges facing student affairs work will probably be recorded as important, mediating contextual variables. Using qualitative methods, Oblander (1986) discovered that "student development" was more likely to take the form of a philosophy, belief system, or role orientation, rather than technologies used by staff to intentionally encourage students' development.

Policy analysis is the process of gathering and arraying evidence for and against alternative policy options to ensure that the values of relevant audiences are considered in deliberations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Most student affairs staff members are not knowledgable about the process of policy development. In fact, very few policy analysis papers appear in student affairs journals; indeed, the number of such papers published in the past 18 years has declined for unknown reasons (Kuh et al., 1986a). However, the need to know how student life policies are developed and what impact they have has never been greater. For example, are certain organizational structures related to feelings of alienation on the part of minority students? What is the relationship between various student life

policies and student development (Kuh et al., 1987)?

Naturalistic inquiry methods have great potential for understanding the relationship between student life policies and students' behavior. "Thick descriptions" (Lincoln & Guba, 1975) of student life policy formulation would make for interesting reading, and would provide a useful framework within which to interpret information gathered to address other policy questions. Staff often overlook the amount of discretion (and therefore influence) they exert in determining the meaning of policy in their setting (Lipsky, 1980). Investigations using qualitative methods may serve to inform and empower student life staff.

Faculty and student life researchers are encouraged to experiment with inquiry methods congenial to non-orthodox perspectives on organizing when studying the contributions of student affairs to the quality of the undergraduate experience (Kuh, 1981). The student affairs field has certain traditions that are quite compatible with qualitative inquiry techniques in general and naturalistic research methods in particular. Becoming engaged--both intellectually and emotionally--in students' development and individual and group decision-making processes characterizes the student affairs field. The act of engagement surely influences what students and student affairs staff experience and how they experience it. Engagement should also characterize the inquiry process in student affairs work.

Conclusion

Student affairs professionals work in increasingly complex organizational environments. While student development theory is

a necessary frame of reference for student affairs work, it is not sufficient. In addition to the insights into life in colleges and universities generated by conventional models, student affairs staff must also develop an appreciation for the paradoxes and anomalies embraced by emergent, non-orthodox perspectives on organizing. An interesting anomaly about the student affairs literature is that while the field is based on the premises that each person is unique and that individual differences should be tolerated, the inquiry methods used in the vast majority of papers focused on organizational issues (as well as student development) published in student affairs journals is grounded in the positivist inquiry paradigm which masks institutional as well as individual differences and prizes generalizability.

Student affairs has an unprecedented opportunity to join with others to wedge cracks in a beleaguered positivist paradigm which supports conventional models of organizational behavior (Kuh, Shedd & Whitt, 1987). Emergent organizational perspectives can be used as a vehicle through which a rapprochement between intergrative, humanistic values and objective, reductionistic ways of knowing can be furthered.

Notes:

1This paper draws on many of the ideas explored in detail in Kuh (in press) and Kuh, Whitt and Shedd (1987).

2 Space does not permit a detailed examination of the assumptions on which the conventional models and emergent, non-orthodox perspectives are based. In Kuh (in press), I do just that! Peterson et al. (1986) also provide a nice summary of the extant organizational context literature.

References

Albright, R., Barr, M., Golseth, A., Kuh, G., Lyons, J., Rhatigan, J., & Sandeen, A. (in press). A perspective on student affairs. Iowa City: American Council on Education and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Argyis, C., & Shon, D. A. (1978). Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley.

Baldridge, J.V. Power and conflict in the university: Research in the sociology of complex organizations. New York: Wiley.

Baldridge, J.V., Curtis, D.V., Ecker, G.P., & Riley, G.L. (1983). Alternative models of goverance in higher education. In J. Baldridge and T. Deal (Eds.), Governing academic organizations (pp. 2-25). Berkeley: McCutchan.

Banning, J. H. (1980). The campus ecology manager role. In U. Delworth and G. Hanson (Eds.), Student services: A handbook for the profession (pp 209-227). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Borland, D. T. (1983). Organizational foundations of administration. In T. K. Miller, R. B. Winston, & W. R. Mendenhall (Eds.), Administration and leadership in student affairs (pp. 31-51). Muncie, IN: Accelerated Development.

Burns, J.M. (1984). The power to lead. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Cameron, K.S., & Ulrich, D.O. (1986). Transformational leadership in colleges and universities. In J.C. Smart (Ed.), Higher education: Handbook of theory and research, Vol. II (pp. 1-42). New York: Agathon.

Capra, F. (1983). The turning point: Science, society, and the rising culture. New York: Basic Books.

Chaffee, E.E. (1983). Rational decision-making in higher education. Boulder: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Clark, D.L. (1985). Emerging paradigms in organizational theory and research. In Y.S. Lincoln (Ed.), Organizational theory and inquiry: The paradigm revolution (pp.43-78). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Cohen, M., & March, J. G. (1974). Leadership and ambiguity: The American college presidency. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Cohen, M., March, J.G., & Olsen, J.P. (1972). A garbage can model of organizational choice. Administrative Science Quarterly, 17(1), 1-25.

Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs. (1986). CAS standards and guidelines for student services/development programs. Iowa City, IA: American College Testing Program.

Dill, D.D. (1982). The management of academic culture: Notes on the management of meaning and social integration. Higher Education, 11, 303-320.

Dutton, T. B., & Rickard, S. T. (1980). Organizing student services. In U. Delworth and G. Hanson (Eds.), Student services: A handbook for the profession (pp. 386-408). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ferguson, M. (1980). The aquarian conspiracy: Personal and social transformation in the 1980's. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Foxley, C. H. (Ed.). (1980). Applying management techniques. New Directions for Student Services, No. 9. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gardner, J.W. (1986). The heart of the matter: Leader-constituent interaction, Leadership Papers No. 3. Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector.

Georgiou, P. (1973). The goal paradigm and notes toward a counter paradigm. Administrative Science Quarterly, 18, 291-310.

Greenleaf, R.K. (1973). The servant as leader. Peterborough, NH: Center for Applied Sciences.

Halstead, J.R. (1980). A time allocation study of chief student affairs officers at C.I.C. institutions. Unpublished doctoral disertation, The Ohio State University.

Hedberg, B., Nystrom, P., & Starbuck, W. (1976). Camping on seesaws: Prescriptions for a self-designing organization. Administrative Science Quarterly, 21, 41-65.

Howard, G. S. (1985). Can research in the human sciences become more relevant to practice? Journal of Counseling and Development, 63, 539-544.

Huff, A.S. (1985). Managerial implications of the emerging paradigm. In Y.S. Lincoln (Ed.), Organizational theory and inquiry: The paradigm revolution (pp. 161-183). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Kast, F.E., & Rosenzweig, J.E. (1974). Organization and management: A systems approach. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Kuh, G. D. (1981). Indices of quality in the undergrauate experience. AAHE-ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 4. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education.

Kuh, G. D. (1983a). Guiding assumptions about student affairs organizations. In G. D. Kuh (Ed.), Understanding student organizations. New Directions for Student Services, no. 23 (pp. 15-26). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G. D. (1983b). Tactics for understanding and improving student affairs organizations. In G. D. Kuh (Ed.), Understanding student affairs organizations. New Directions for Student Services, no. 23 (pp. 67-78). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G. D. (1984). A framework for understanding student affairs work. Journal of College Student Personnel, 25, 25-31.

Kuh, G. D. (1985). What is extraordinary about ordinary student affairs organizations. NASPA Journal, 23(2), 31-43.

Kuh, G.D. (in press). Organizing in student affairs. In G. Hanson and U. Delworth (Eds.), Student services: A handbook for the profession (rev). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G. D., Bean, J. P., Bradley, R. K., & Coomes, M. D. (1986a). Contributions of student affairs journals to the college student research. Journal of College Student Personnel, 27, 292-304.

Kuh, G. D., Bean, J. P., Bradley, R. K., & Coomes, M. D. (1986b). Is one galaxy enough? Journal of College Student Personnel, 27, 311-312.

Kuh, G. D., Shedd, J. D., & Whitt, E. J. (1987). Student affairs and liberal education: Unrecognized common law partners. Journal of College Student Personnel, 28, 252-259.

Kuh, G.D., Whitt, E.J., & Shedd, J.D. Student affairs work, 2001: A paradigmatic odyssey. Alexandria, VA: American College Personnel Association.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970). The structure of scientific revolutions (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lincoln, Y.S. (1985). Introduction. In Y. Lincoln (Ed.), Organizational theory and inquiry: The paradigm revolution (pp. 29-40). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Lipsky, M. (1980). Street level bureaucracy: Dilemms of the individual in public services. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Masland, A.T. (1985). Organizational culture in the study of higher education. The Review of Higher Education, 8(2), 157-168.

Meyer, J.W. (1984). Organizations as ideological systems. In T. Sergiovanni and J. Corbally (Eds.), Leadership and organizational culture (pp. 186-205). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Michael, D.N. (1985). the new competence: Management skills for the future. In R. Davis (Ed.), Leadership and institutional renewal, New Directions for Higher Education, no. 49 (pp. 91-104). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Morgan, G. (1986). Images of organizations. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Neustadt, R.E., & May, E.R. (1986). Thinking in time: The uses of history for decision-makers. New York: Free Press.

Oblander, F. (1986). Implementation of student development theory in a student affairs organization: A study of the theory to practice link. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University.

Peterson, M.W., Cameron, K.S., Mets, L.A., Jones, P., & Ettington, D. (1986). The organizational context for teaching and learning: A review of the research literature. Ann Arbor: National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning.

Pfeffer, J. (1982). Organizations and organizational theory. Boston: Pitman.

Pondy, L. R. (1978). Leadership as a language game. In M. W. McCall, Jr. and M. M. Lombardo (Eds.), Leadership: Where else can we go? (pp. 87-101). Durham: Duke University Press.

Rodgers, R. F. (1977). Student personnel work as social intervention. In G. H. Knock (Ed.), Perspectives on the preparation of student affairs professionals. Washington, D. C.: American College Personnel Association.

Schein, E. H. (1985). Organizational culture and leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schroeder, C. C., Nicholls, G. E., & Kuh, G. D. (1983). Exploring the rain forest: Testing assumptions and taking risks. In G. D. Kuh (Ed.), Understanding student affairs organizations. New Directions for Student Services, No. 23 (51-65). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schwartz, P., & Ogilvy, J. (1979). The emergent paradigm: Changing patterns of thought and belief. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International Analytical Report No. 7, Values and Lifestyles Program.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1984). Leadership as cultural expression. In T. J. Sergiovanni and J. E. Corbally (Eds.), Leadership and organizational culture: New perspectives on administrative theory and practice (pp. 105-114). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Smircich, L. (1983). Concepts of culture and organizational analysis. Administrative Science Quarterly, 28, 339-358.

Strange, C. C. (1983). Traditional perspectives on student affairs organizations. In G. D. Kuh (Ed.), Understanding student affairs organizations. New Directions for Student Services, No. 23 (pp. 5-13). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Weick, K. E. (1979). The social psychology of organizing. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley.

Table 1

Properties of Conventional Models

Hierarchical structures are normal, necessary, functional, and desirable.

Communication channels are functional and clearly delineated.

Expertise, control, and authority are commensurate with position and exercised by superordinates.

Goals and means to attain goals are clear, shared, give direction to behavior, and are tied directly to outcomes.

Intentions are directly linked to actions.

Reliability and predictability of organizational processes are hampered only by factors such as knowledge and technology.

Table 2

Advantages and Limitations of Conventional Organizational Models

Model	Advantages	Limitations
Rational		
	Compatible with academic values (fairness, purposeful behavior). Appeals to reason/logic.	Constrained by information processing limits. Expectations for goal consensus and control often are not met. Oversimplifies complex problems.
Bureaucratic		
	Clearly defined roles, functions, responsibilities, scope of authority, and relationships. Expertise is acknowledged by position. Performance is standardized. Prospective approach. Emphasizes productivity.	Incompatible with certain values of the academy (e.g.,autonomy, multiple areas of expertise, decisions by peers). Resistant to change. Measures of productivity not well-suited to purposes of higher education.
Collegial		
	Consistent with traditions of academy. Responsive to persuasive argument of colleagues. Based on democratic principles. Ensures representation.	Inefficient (labor intensive and time consuming). Insensitive to power differentials, resource availability, and policy implementation issues.
Political		
	Acknowledges importance of power and conflict resolution. Emphasizes policy as vehicle for issue management. Encourages involvement of disparate stakeholder groups.	Incongruent with certain values of academy (e.g., openness, fairness, peer governance). Reinforces status quo (i.e., those with power obtain resources). Exchanges achievement and merit for influence in decision making.

TABLE 3

Properties of Emergent, Non-Orthodox Perspectives

Heterarchical interactions are uninhibited by hierarchical structures and facilitate organizational learning and effective administration; organizational structures evolve over time.

Information is available from many sources and flows in many directions.

Any person at any level has the potential to influence organizational behavior in an effective, positive, creative manner.

The relationships among events, individual behavior, technologies and outcomes in IHEs are ambiguous.

Intentions and actions, by units or individuals, are loosely coupled, and may be understood only retrospectively.

Qualities of indeterminacy, morphogenesis, action learning, self-organizing, and holonomy compromise expectations for reliabiity and predictability.

Table 4

Advantages and Limitations of Emergent Organizational Perspectives

Perspective	Advantages	Limitations
Organized Anarchy	More descriptive of life in IHEs. Images are intuitively appealing and evocative. Compatible with academy values (e.g., of autonomy, minimal supervision). Acknowledges retrospective understanding rather than prescriptive models.	Information not always available to those who need it. Legitimates and encourages divided loyalties. Obviates coordinated response to issues/crises. Does not suggest implications for staff/leader behavior. Challenges basic assumptions about effective organizing (e.g., goals are superfluous).
Culture	Acknowledges context as important variable in understanding behavior. Explains unusual and routine behavior. Accommodates different behaviors (subculture) within institution or student affairs units. Acknowledges validity of subjective views. Emphasizes importance of mutual shaping.	Lacks conceptual specificity. Insights gleaned from one experience/culture not transferable to others. Organizational properties cannot be manipulated/controlled. Requires different expectations for leader behavior.
Holographic	Compatible with ecological and cybernetic principles (e.g., mutual shaping, evolutionary change). Acknowledges importance of all members of organization. Deemphasizes formal structures and procedures which encourages innovation, creativity and organizational change. Encourages personal and professional development of staff through role expansion and involvement in problem solving and changing of norms.	Based on unfamiliar concepts (e.g., action learning) which are counter intuitive (e.g., instead of pursuing goals, avoid undesirable conditions). Contradicts conventional wisdom about organizations (e.g., control and prediction are not necessary). Emphasizes complexity/paradox over simplicity/search for correct solutions. Encourages policies that many institutions are not prepared to adopt (e.g., trust students to govern themselves).